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ABSTRACT

Expectations that graduating students hold about certain aspects of their future job and career were examined, with focus on expectations regarding starting salary, job tenure, bases for pay raises, and the frequency of performance feedback. The sources of career information used by the college graduates were also examined. Approximately 2,000 graduating seniors were sent surveys, with 447 responding. The survey covered issues regarding their job expectations (tasks, duties, and responsibilities), acquisition of career information, career preparation, and career attitudes. Some of the important conclusions are as follows: expectations regarding salary were generally accurate when compared with actual starting salaries of graduates from the year before; students expected to receive feedback much more often than is the current practice in organizations; students perceived their career information to be moderately accurate, specific as well as general, and important; source use did not differ greatly across academic majors, except that engineering students and business majors indicated a higher use of career development and placement services than other majors; and job specific sources of career information were regarded as more credible, specific, and accurate than general sources of career information. Contains 17 references and 5 tables. (SM)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study explored the expectations that graduating students hold about certain aspects of their future job and career. The focus in this report was on expectations regarding starting salary, job tenure, bases for pay raises, and the frequency of performance feedback. The sources of career information used by the college graduates were also examined.

Approximately 2,000 graduating seniors (randomly selected, according to college granting degree) were sent surveys, with 447 (22%) responding. The survey covered issues regarding their job expectations (tasks, duties, and responsibilities), acquisition of career information, career preparation, and career attitudes.

Several important conclusions were drawn from the analyses:

1. Expectations regarding salary were generally accurate when compared with actual starting salaries of graduates from the year before.
2. Expectations regarding turnover reflected the current national trend of a 50% turnover rate within the first several years of employment.
3. Students expected to receive feedback much more often than is the current practice in organizations.
4. Students perceived their career information to be moderately accurate, specific as well as general, and important.
5. Classes and coursework were the most frequently used information sources for career information while company representatives and Career Development and Placement Services[1] were the least frequently used sources.
6. Source use did not differ greatly across academic majors, except that engineering students indicated a higher use of Career Development and Placement Services than other majors. Business majors also reported frequently using Career Development and Placement Services.
7. Students who developed more specific career plans used more sources for career and job information than did students with less developed career plans.
8. Job specific sources of career information were regarded as more credible, specific and accurate than general sources of career information.

Implications from these results can influence organizational recruiting programs in several ways. When attempting to attract a qualified applicant, the recruiter must be certain to provide company information so that the potential employee can form accurate expectations of the job and the company. Organizations may also want to target college graduates even as early as high school, with specific information which can be used earlier in forming career and job expectations.

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[1] During this study, the name of the placement office was changed from Placement Services to Career Development and Placement Services.

INTRODUCTION

An individual's expectations about a future job and career strongly influence how the individual may react to the initial position offered by a firm, particularly in terms of job success and career development. Berlew and Hall (1966) investigated the impact of college graduates' expectations and the requirements of these graduates' initial job assignments on their performance as managerial trainees. They found that college graduates who were assigned jobs which met their expectations of positive and challenging work had higher rates of job advancement than graduates who were assigned jobs which did not meet their expectations of positive and challenging work. These results suggest that unmet initial expectations may have long-term consequences for job and career success.

Graduates' expectations may also influence their choice to stay with or leave the organization. A study by the Sterling Institute, as reported by Rowan (1981), found that the average corporation lost 50% of its newly hired college graduates within the first five years of employment. Other studies have reported similar figures, suggesting that the turnover problem is especially prevalent among new hires.

Most of the research examining the turnover problem has adopted an organizational perspective (McEnvoy & Cascio, 1985). However, it may be more appropriate to investigate the problem from an individual perspective. Employing an individual perspective, Wanous (1980) has suggested that job experiences could be evaluated in terms of a person's initial job expectations. Specifically, he has proposed that if an employee's actual job experiences matched or positively exceeded the job expectations, the individual was more likely to remain with the organization. Conversely, if actual job experiences negatively differed from the individual's expectations, the individual was more likely to leave the organization. In addition, factors outside an organization's control, such as the individual's personal goals, health, and family situation, could be powerful forces that may influence the decision process concerning a person's job and career. A full understanding of the antecedents of career success, such as job performance, should include individual factors as well as the organization's environment. The influence of both work and nonwork related factors on career outcomes can be examined by focussing on the individual's job and career expectations.

Research on Job and Career Expectations

Studies examining college graduates' job and career expectations can be divided into two categories: 1) studies that identify important work values for subjects and 2) studies that focus specifically on the expectations people have about a particular organization or job. The former category is important to the study of job and career expectations because work values influence work expectations. The latter category is important to the study of job and career expectations because it emphasizes the interaction between the organization and the individual in determining the consequences of met and unmet expectations.

Work Values

La Marre and Hopkins (1982) compared survey research on work values for people in the 1960's and the 1980's. They concluded that a major shift in work values was occurring (also see Hopkins, 1986). The comparisons indicated a decrease in the emphasis placed on work as a source of personal fulfillment. La Marre and Hopkins surveyed 200 college graduates in order to draw a profile of the work values and expectations of the "employee of the eighties". They found most of the graduates ranked health, family, personal happiness, and ethical standards as more important than a job. With regard to expectations about aspects such as compensation, benefits, organizational loyalty, travel, and job/personal life trade-offs, several differences were found among graduates with various academic majors, and a few differences were found between male and female graduates. These differences implied a pluralistic work

force that would be difficult to stereotype. Nevertheless, in terms of very basic work values and expectations, the investigators compiled the following profile of future employees:

> "These results indicate that typical college graduates of the 1980s want rich personal lives and expect and show a concern for balancing personal demands with professional demands. At the same time, these graduates appear to perceive themselves as hard working and competent and to be asking for more rather than less job responsibility and challenge." (p. 33)

Wheeler (1981) provided additional support for La Marre and Hopkins' results with regard to gender similarities and academic major differences in work values. His study investigated the importance of fifteen work values for business and education college majors. He found female business students had values that were more similar to male business students than to female education students. Neumann and Neumann (1983) examined differences in work values that were associated with different academic majors. Using Super's (1962) definitions of fifteen work values, Neumann and Neumann were able to identify significant differences in the values of engineering and liberal arts students. These two college majors obviously lead to different types of career paths and the different careers influence different expectations about general characteristics of their work. For example, a value that characterized the liberal arts students but not the engineering students was a Management Value. This value was associated with the expectation that the individual's work included the planning of work for others to do. Likewise, a value that characterized the engineering students was an Associates Value, which implied a work expectation that the individual would come into contact with likeable coworkers.

The impact of an individual's work values on his/her work performance and career development is unclear. One study (Greenhaus, Seidel, and Marinis, 1983) found a significant relationship between value attainment and job satisfaction; however, the measurement of value attainment was confounded with a satisfaction component. The antecedent of work and career performance has been more successfully investigated through a focus on specific work expectations rather than general work values.

Work Expectations

Work expectations have been investigated as a possible explanation for the turnover problem. A significant relationship between new employees' met and unmet expectations and turnover would provide organizations with hiring guidelines that may enable them to minimize a costly and common problem. Organizations could (1) reject those applicants who have expectations that are inconsistent with the organization's expectations and/or (2) modify expectations of applicants to be more realistic and comparable to the expectations that can be met and satisfied by the organization.

Dunnette, Arvey and Banas (1973) investigated college graduates' backgrounds, expectations concerning their first job and career, and characteristics of their present job. The authors then compared individuals' expectations about the job and the job experiences of the first job and present job with the organization. The authors discovered that these individuals' first jobs fell below expectations on fourteen of fifteen factors such as working conditions, pay, recognition and variety. Only expectations regarding security were met. This pattern occurred for persons who remained with the organization and for those who left within four years after hire. However, for those individuals who remained with the organization, a closer match between expectations and characteristics of the current job was found. Wanous (1976) found a similar pattern of lowering expectations as newcomers became more familiar with the organization and their role within it.

These findings have led to the conclusion that if newcomers were given accurate information concerning the job on which to base their expectations -- a realistic job preview -- turnover could be reduced. A realistic job preview (RJP) is a recruitment technique designed to "increase the amount and accuracy of information given to job candidates, in an effort to increase the overall quality of their organizational choices" (Wanous, 1977, p. 612). The primary purpose of the RJP is to lower the typically

high and unrealistic expectations that new hires perceive about their jobs, thus creating a better match between the new hire's expectations and the organizational reality of the job. In theory, this should lead to an increase in the new hire's ability to adapt, be satisfied with, and stay with the new job. The relationship between RJPs and a number of organizational outcomes, usually turnover, has been widely investigated. Recent reviews of the research on RJPs have shown a small but significant relationship between RJPs and turnover (McEnvoy & Cascio, 1985; Premack & Wanous, 1985), indicating that RJPs can reduce the rate of turnover among new hires. However, the relationships between RJPs and other job outcomes, (e.g., satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment), have not shown significant results, suggesting that RJPs may have a limited benefit (Premack & Wanous, 1985).

Despite the fact that much research has been done on RJPs indicating their potential usefulness, it is not yet clear why RJPs work (Breaugh & Billings, 1986). Breaugh and Billings emphasized the importance of viewing RJPs from an individual's perspective. Specifically, they proposed that individuals evaluate information about a prospective organization using five criteria: (1) accuracy, (2) specificity, (3) breadth or scope, (4) credibility of the source, and (5) importance. These five factors influence individuals' expectations about a specific job. Thus, Breaugh and Billings suggested that the strength of RJPs may be underestimated when measured only as an organizational variable. Given this perspective, RJP has been defined as the extent to which an applicant is exposed to realistic information about a specific job and organization and therefore, RJPs should be examined on an individual level.

Study Objectives

The purpose of this study was to examine the individual work expectations of college seniors and to study their effects on the actual work outcomes and future expectations of these individuals after they start full-time employment. Following the suggestions of Breaugh and Billings (1986), the study included both individual and organizational variables to tap work-related as well as non-work related factors that can influence the formation of work expectations. The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To examine realistic job planning and expectations of college students as related to work satisfaction and performance (absenteeism and turnover).
2. To explore gender differences in job planning and expectations.
3. To explore vocational choice (college major) differences in job planning.

The study was longitudinal in design. The first phase of data collection occurred when the students were graduating seniors, and the second phase is scheduled to occur approximately six months after graduation. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the results of Phase I of the study which involves the completion of initial questionnaires by college seniors looking for employment.

The Study - Phase I

A random sample was drawn from a population of graduating college seniors who were in the process of seeking employment but had not yet accepted a job offer. The seniors were stratified according to the college granting the degree, so that a representative sample of the graduating class could be obtained. A total of 2,000 students were surveyed. Respondents totaled 447 or 22%. The sample was comprised of 61% women respondents; had a mean age of 22.8; and represented a variety of academic majors from eleven different colleges within Michigan State University.

Survey

The students completed a 233-item questionnaire designed to measure a variety of individual characteristics. The questionnaire included demographic information, job and life expectations, sources of career information used, career attitudes, and career preparation.

Demographics. Students provided information on age, gender, academic major, career choice, prior work experience, marital status, intentions to marry, and intentions to attend graduate school. For Phase I of the study, academic major and gender were the most important variables since job and career expectations are predicted to be different for the various gender and academic major subgroups.

Job and Life Expectations. Students answered open-ended questions concerning the type of first job that would be ideal for their career and described this job in terms of tasks, duties, and responsibilities. The subjects described their expectations regarding salary, tenure with first employer, raises, and the frequency of feedback on job performance. They also assessed the similarity of their career choice with their parents' career(s).

Sources of Career Information. The students were asked to evaluate various sources of information that may have been used to obtain knowledge about their chosen career and the first job they were considering. A list of possible sources was provided, including: (1) parents, siblings, or other relatives; (2) friends; (3) counselors and academic advisors (career counselors, teachers, professors, etc.) ; (4) Career Development and Placement Services (staff and career information center); (5) company/organizational representatives (recruiters, interviewers, etc.); (6) personal experience on the job (part-time jobs, internships, etc.); (7) observation of people in their career (experience with the job as a customer/consumer); (8) library, newspapers, and magazines; (9) classes and coursework; and (10) another category specified by the student.

Participants indicated which sources were used, even ones that did not provide any information. For each source utilized in their decision-making, students evaluated these characteristics:

a. Credibility: Extent to which the source of information was able to provide good, accurate information.

b. Specificity: Extent to which the source provided detailed information for your first job.

c. Breadth: Extent to which the source covered a wide variety of topics (versus a narrow focus on few aspects) of your first job.

d. Importance: Extent to which the source's information was important (versus trivial).

Each characteristic was measured using a five point Likert-type rating scale.

Career Attitude and Career Preparation. The Career attitude scale measured four aspects: (1) career planning -- having a clear idea of career goals and strategies for achieving these goals; (2) career involvement -- importance of one's career; (3) identity resolution -- having a clear idea of one's capabilities and personal identity; and (4) adaptability -- flexibility in job/career experiences (Gould, 1979). The career preparation scale measured anticipatory expectations concerning five aspects of the job: (1) performance -- tasks and duties of the job; (2) language -- jargon and technical terms; (3) people -- relationship with coworkers; (4) goals -- link between organizational and individual goals; and (5) politics -- link between organizational politics and career success.

RESULTS

Demographic information is provided in Table 1 concerning age, grade point average, majors, and careers. Students identified a variety of expected careers; a total of 88 occupational codes were given to the careers described by the subjects. The ten most frequently mentioned occupations are also included in Table 1. Only seven students were unable to identify a career for themselves.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

Average Age: 22.8
Average Grade Point Average: 2.998
Percent of Sample by College

College	Number of Students	Percent of Sample
Business	100	23
Communication Arts	72	16
Social Science	48	14
Natural Science	48	11
Engineering	46	10
Agriculture	33	7
Arts and Letters	27	6
Education	27	6
Human Ecology	20	4
Lyman Briggs	7	2
James Madison	2	1
TOTAL	440	100%

Top Ten Most Frequently Stated Career Choices

Rank	Occupation
1	Engineering (general)
2	Accountant/Auditor
3	Marketing/Public Relations/Advertising
4	Teacher, Elementary
5	Business Service Sales
6	Manager -- Service Organization (e.g., food, lodging, entertainment)
7	Teacher, Secondary
8	Sales Representative
9	Forestry/Environmental Science
10	Social/Recreational

Expectations regarding salary, tenure, raises and feedback provide important insight into the knowledge and understanding college graduates have of their career and initial job. The knowledge and understanding that graduates have and the expectations they hold may have an impact on their job performance. Hence, this information may be useful to organizations when hiring college graduates. The expectations for these four factors, salary, tenure, raises, and feedback, will be discussed with special attention given to differences between males and females and among college majors.

Starting Salary

The students' expectations for starting salaries for these careers varied widely. The range of expected salaries was from $10,000 to $52,000 per year with most subjects falling in the range between $15,000 to $25,000. Table 2 presents a comparison of expectations for graduates of each college with the average starting salaries for that college in 1987. Only students from the College of Arts and Letters had salary expectations that were below the mean starting salary for 1987 graduates. Of the remaining colleges, three -- Business, Natural Science, and Social Science -- showed expected starting salaries greater than $1,000 over the actual starting salary figures for 1987. These higher expectations, however, barely kept pace with inflation (assumed to be 5% for 1988). While most students had fairly accurate expectations regarding salaries for their initial job, few apparently considered inflationary trends in their expectations.

Table 2
Salary Expectations by College*

College:	Mean Expected Starting Salary	Mean Starting Salary for 1987[a]
Agriculture/Natural Resources	$19,548	$19,266[b]
Business	$22,889	$21,266
Engineering	$28,174	$27,869
Human Ecology	$17,850	$17,209
Natural Science	$22,354	$20,981
Education	$18,963	$18,337
Communication Arts & Sciences	$19,247	$18,366
Arts and Letters	$17,481	$18,697
Social Sciences	$20,867	$19,316

*The data for Lyman Briggs and James Madison are not reported due to small sample sizes.

[a] Figures taken from, Fitzpatrick, Edwin B., 1987. Salary Report 1986-87. Placement Services, Michigan State University

[b] Average Starting Salary for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources does not include packaging engineering who, for the purposes of this study, have been classified with the engineers.

Women across all colleges had an expected starting salary of $20,399. This figure was significantly different from the salaries expected by men -- $23,138. However, this large difference may reflect the majors women select versus men. Women are generally found in the lower paying occupations, such as teaching, human ecology, and social work. By controlling for college, the gender difference largely disappeared; only in Business and Communication Arts were significant differences reported. In Business,

women expected to receive a starting salary of $21,625 while men expected $24,535. For women in Communication Arts, the expected salary was approximately $18,119 while men reported an expected salary of $20,774.

Turnover

In terms of turnover, Figure 1 indicates that across colleges the turnover rate of these students was expected to be 48% in the first three years. In fact, only 15% of all the graduates across all colleges expected to be with their first employer more than five years. No differences between males and females were found; however, differences among college majors appeared. Figure 2 shows that Education majors indicated the longest expected tenure of all colleges; 56% of Education majors expected to be with their first employer longer than three years. Arts and Letters majors indicated the shortest expected tenure; only 11% of these graduates expected to be with their first employer for longer than three years.

Differences among colleges also emerged in the percentage of students indicating no clear expectation for tenure with their first employer. Thirty-four percent (34%) of Arts and Letters majors indicated that they had no clear idea how long they would remain with their first employer. In contrast, only 10% of Human Ecology, 11% of Communication Arts, and 13% of Business majors did not have clear tenure expectations.

The differences in expected tenure and ability to state a clear tenure expectation could reflect differences in the knowledge students have about their first job. It could be that Business and Communication Arts majors are less ambiguous about the characteristics of their first job than are Arts and Letters and Agriculture/Natural Resources majors. If Communication Arts and Business majors have less ambiguity about this first position, they are better able to form tenure expectations. Another possible explanation for the differences in expected tenure across colleges is that the differences may exist in promotion requirements. It could be that Education, Business, and Engineering majors indicated longer expected tenure in their first position because their typical career paths require a longer tenure in each position than the typical career paths for Arts and Letters and Social Science majors.

Raises and Feedback

Expectations regarding the final two aspects -- factors on which raises are based and frequency of feedback -- involve the students' knowledge of specific aspects of the job. Figure 3 illustrates the expectations of all students regarding raises and feedback. An overwhelming majority of the students (82%) preferred to receive raises on the basis of their individual performance. The remaining 18% was fairly evenly split between the use of cost-of-living, seniority, group performance, and no preference as a basis for receiving raises. No difference between males and females nor among college graduates appeared in terms of preferred bases for raises.

Feedback expectations -- including feedback intrinsic to the job and formal feedback -- were not as sharply split. Many students (35%) expected feedback on a weekly basis, while 28% of the students expected monthly feedback and 20% of the students expected daily feedback. Again, no substantial differences between gender or among college majors existed in terms of feedback expectations. These expectations contrast sharply with the frequency of performance appraisal and feedback currently found in organizations. Many organizations do not have formal performance feedback systems. Organizations that conduct performance appraisals and feed this information back to employees, usually do so on a yearly or, at best, bi-yearly basis. The discrepancy between graduates' expectations of frequent feedback and organizational feedback policies may be a source of difficulty in new graduates' adjustment to an organization.

Two competing explanations exist for the lack of differences between genders and among majors. On the one hand, it could be that there are no large differences between persons regarding their preferred basis for raises and expectations for feedback. It is possible that all persons, regardless of gender or

Figure 1
Expected Tenure with First Employer -- All Colleges

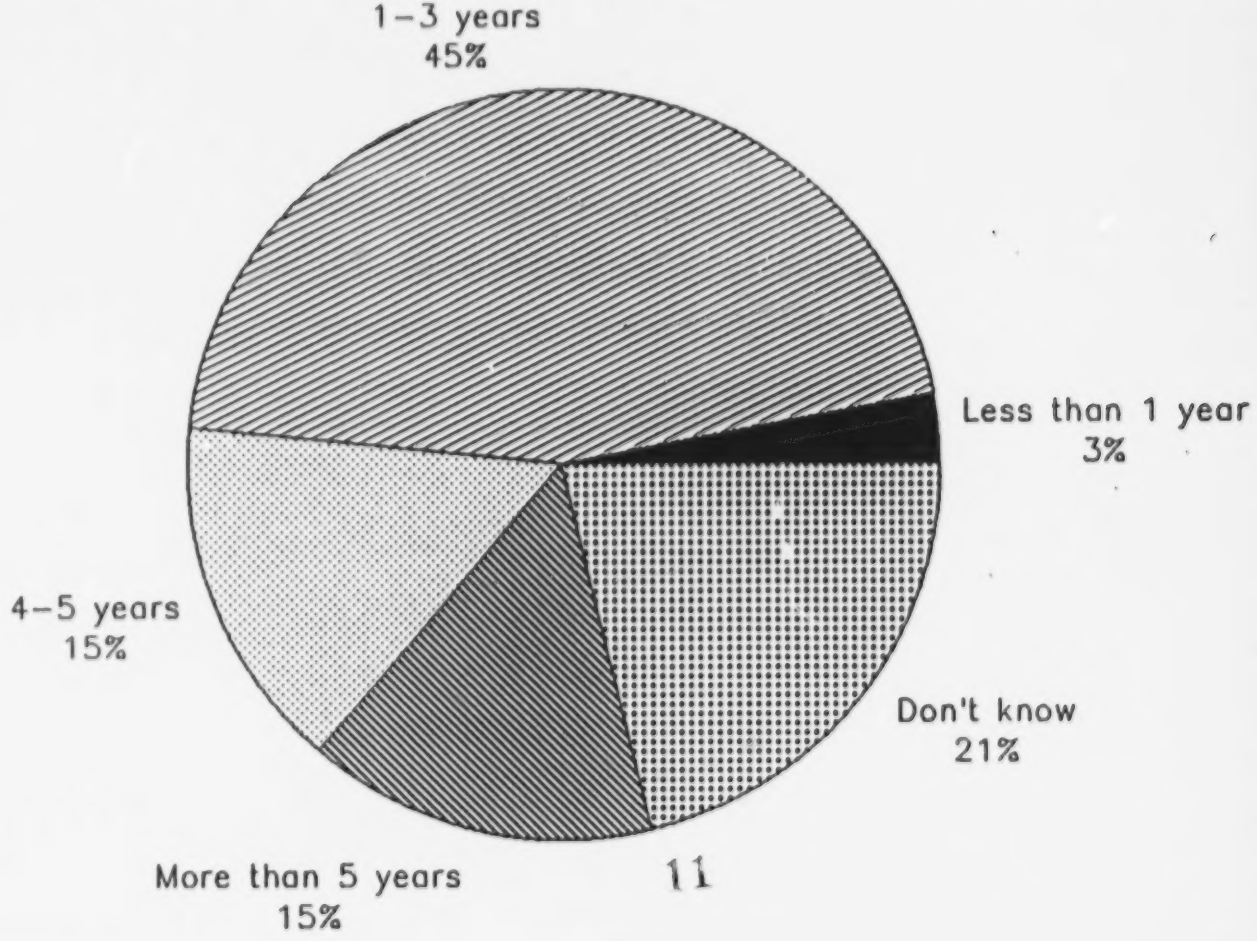
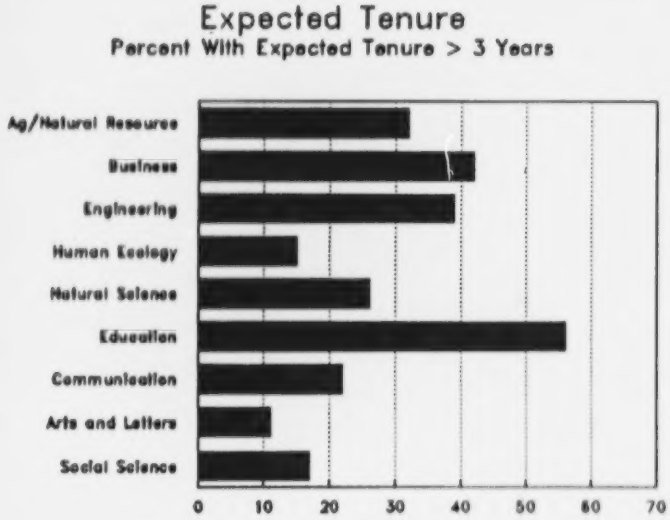


Figure 2
Tenure Expectations



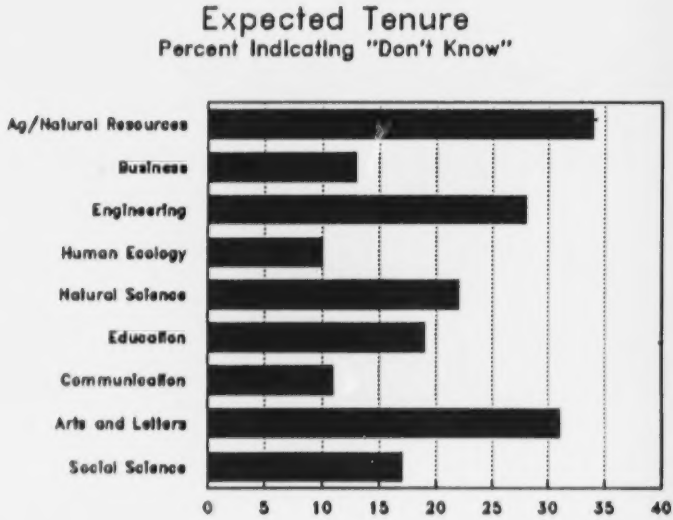
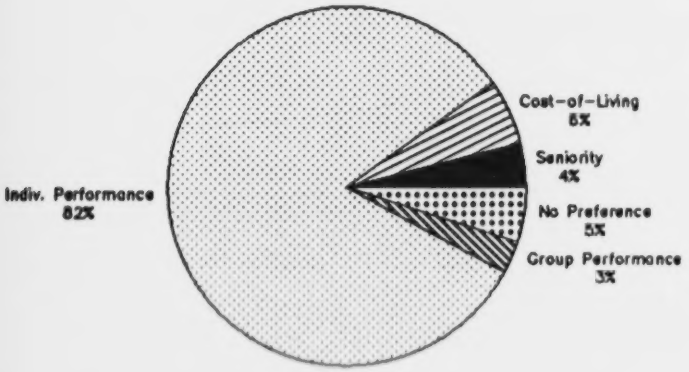


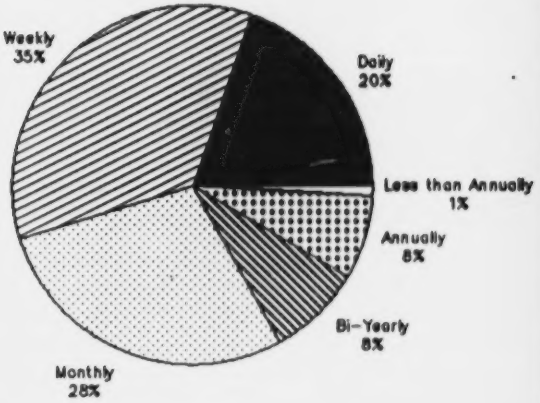
Figure 3

Raises and Feedback Expectations Across All Colleges

Preferred Factors for Receiving Raises
All Colleges



Expected Frequency of Feedback
All Colleges



chosen occupation, prefer to have their raises based on individual performance and are fairly evenly split on the expected frequency of feedback. On the other hand, it could be that no differences emerged in these results because the students did not yet have adequate, specific information on which to base expectations regarding raises and feedback. This explanation highlights the important role of career/job information in the formation of students' expectations.

Acquisition of Career and Job Information

These expectations concerning salary, raises, tenure and feedback were based upon students' information about an occupation before assuming a full-time position in that occupation. Thus, the career and job information students receive from outside sources can contribute to the formation of these expectations. Most students across all colleges indicated that the information they had about their chosen career and first job was moderately specific, moderately broad in scope, moderately important, and moderately accurate. The means for these four items across all colleges were 3.44, 3.60, 2.93, 3.68, respectively, on a five point scale. There were no large differences across these four factors within each college nor across different colleges with two exceptions: Education majors felt their career information was more specific than other majors indicated and James Madison majors felt their career information was less specific than other majors indicated.

Career information can come from a variety of sources. Figure 4 indicates the frequency with which students across all colleges used ten different sources to obtain career and job information. Classes/coursework had the highest percentage use (72.1%) as a source of information, followed by personal experience and counselors/advisors, (64.6% and 54.1%, respectively). Sources receiving the lowest percentage of use were company/organizational representatives (38.3%) and Career Development and Placement Services (27.7%).

Only slight differences in use of sources existed across colleges. Table 3 gives the percentage for one use of each source for five colleges: Business, Engineering, Communication Arts, Natural Science and Social Science. (Each of these colleges was represented by at least 28 students in this sample). Classes/coursework received the highest percentage use across all colleges, and Career Development and Placement Services received the lowest percentage of use across all colleges with the exception of Engineering. For the Colleges of Business and Engineering, there was much less variation in percentage use across sources than in the other three colleges.

Figure 4
Career Information Source Use

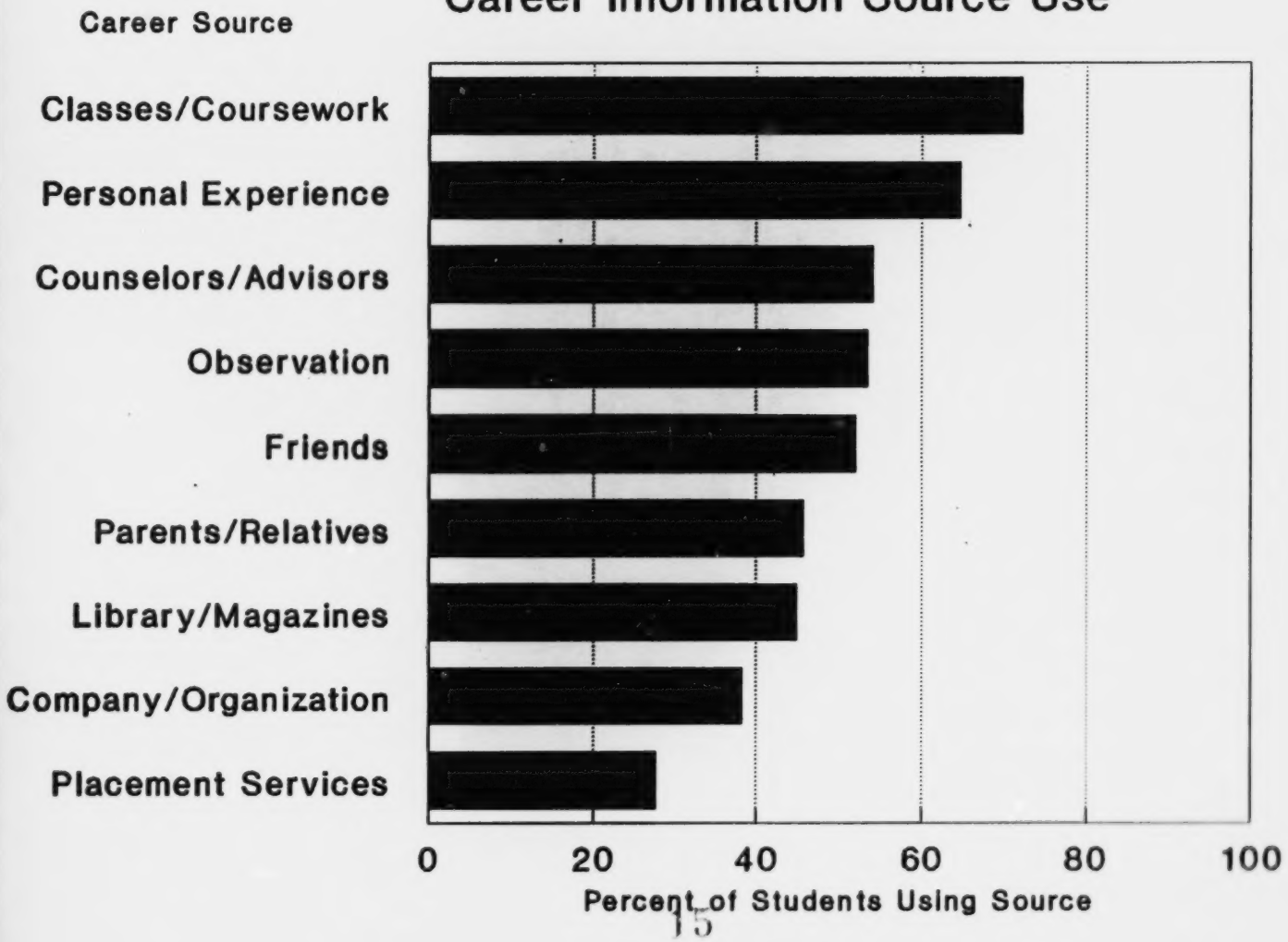


Table 3
Career Source Used By College

College of Business

Source	Percent of students using this source (%)	Rank in Use
Classes/Coursework	76	1
Company/Organizational Reps	56	2
Personal Experiences	56	2
Friends	45	3
Parents/Relatives	43	3
Counselors/Advisors	43	3
Observation of people	39	4
Library	39	4
Placement Services	39	4

College of Engineering

Source	Percent of students using this source (%)	Rank in Use
Classes/Coursework	62	1
Company/Organizational Reps	56	2
Personal Experience	56	2
Friends	56	2
Parents/Relatives	62	1
Counselors/Advisors	42	4
Observation of People	33	6
Library	37	5
Placement Services	49	3

College of Communication Arts and Sciences

Source	Percent of students using this source (%)	Rank in Use
Classes/Coursework	69	1
Company/Organizational Reps	39	4
Personal Experience	69	1
Friends	55	2
Parents/Relatives	39	4
Counselors/Advisors	55	2
Observation of People	50	3
Library	55	2
Placement Services	24	5

Table 3 (Cont.)
Career Source Use By College

College of Natural Science

Source	Percent of students using this source (%)	Rank in Use
Classes/Coursework	80	1
Company/Organizational Reps	33	5
Personal Experience	80	1
Friends	47	3
Parents/Relatives	47	3
Counselors/Advisors	55	2
Observation of People	80	1
Library	37	4
Placement Services	18	6

College of Social Science

Source	Percent of students using this source (%)	Rank in Use
Classes/Coursework	65	1
Company/Organizational Reps	18	4
Personal Experience	65	1
Friends	50	2
Parents/Relatives	35	3
Counselors/Advisors	50	2
Observation of People	50	2
Library	35	3
Placement Services	18	4

Sources that one used may also differ between individuals who had formulated their career to a greater or lesser extent. Career planning reflects the extent to which the student can identify career goals and objectives, how stable and clear these goals are, and whether the student has a scheme or plan developed for achieving these career goals. Students who were above the median on the career planning scale reported higher use across all sources than did students below the median on the career planning scale. Thus, students who are actively involved in planning their careers utilize more sources of information to learn about their career and job options.

The sources of career and job information were rated in terms of credibility, specificity, accuracy, and importance. Table 4 gives the mean ratings across majors from five colleges. The ratings for all aspects in all colleges were uniformly high. Most ratings were between 3.17 and 4.54, indicating a "moderate" to "great" extent of perceived credibility, specificity, breadth, and importance across colleges for the nine reported sources. Generally, personal experience was given the highest rating across all information characteristics.

Table 4
Credibility, Specificity, Breadth, and Importance of Career Source Information

	Classes Coursework	Co/Org Reps	Personal Exp.	Friends	Parents Relatives	Counselors Advisors	Obs.	Library	P.S.
College of Business:									
Credibility									
Mean	3.77	4.12	4.53	3.63	4.29	3.89	4.00	3.50	3.78
N	77	59	53	48	45	44	42	40	40
Specificity									
Mean	3.33	4.19	4.35	3.38	3.38	3.30	3.88	2.97	3.38
N	76	57	58	45	45	44	41	39	40
Breadth									
Mean	3.83	3.35	3.77	3.39	3.81	3.29	3.55	3.5	3.15
N	77	57	56	46	43	42	40	40	39
Importance									
Mean	3.68	4.20	4.45	3.56	4.16	3.54	4.10	3.39	3.77
N	76	56	56	45	43	43	39	39	39
College of Communication Arts:									
Credibility									
Mean	3.65	4.37	4.43	3.61	4.07	3.63	3.95	3.67	3.78
N	52	30	51	41	29	41	39	42	18
Specificity									
Mean	3.66	4.07	4.30	3.74	3.03	3.23	4.00	3.28	3.06
N	53	30	50	42	29	40	39	43	18
Breadth									
Mean	3.86	3.31	3.78	3.44	3.17	3.13	3.54	3.32	3.39
N	50	29	49	41	30	40	37	41	18
Importance									
Mean	3.84	4.00	4.49	3.80	3.83	3.43	3.92	3.02	3.44
N	51	29	49	40	29	40	37	41	18
College of Social Science:									
Credibility									
Mean	3.93	4.18	4.53	3.42	3.32	4.00	4.10	3.71	3.75
N	41	11	40	31	22	32	31	24	12
Specificity									
Mean	3.63	4.36	4.55	3.19	2.86	3.78	4.10	3.83	3.17
N	41	11	40	31	22	32	32	24	12
Breadth									
Mean	3.77	3.36	3.68	3.46	3.38	3.48	3.70	3.17	3.58
N	39	11	38	28	21	31	30	23	12
Importance									
Mean	3.68	4.27	4.39	3.50	3.33	3.72	4.26	3.62	3.83
N	38	11	39	30	21	32	31	21	12

Table 4 (Cont.)
Credibility, Specificity, Breadth, and Importance of Career Source Information

	Classes Coursework	Co/Org Reps	Personal Exp.	Friends	Parents Relatives	Counselors Advisors	Obs.	Library	P.S.
College of Natural Science:									
Credibility									
Mean	3.75	4.19	4.54	3.58	3.83	3.96	3.94	3.29	3.33
N	36	16	35	24	23	27	36	17	9
Specificity									
Mean	3.42	3.94	4.54	3.09	3.00	3.37	3.89	3.00	3.38
N	36	16	35	23	23	27	36	18	8
Breadth									
Mean	3.78	3.38	3.67	3.42	3.61	3.48	3.53	3.47	2.00
N	36	16	36	24	23	27	36	17	9
Importance									
Mean	3.75	4.31	4.52	3.67	3.67	3.56	4.06	3.28	3.11
N	36	16	36	23	23	27	36	18	9
College of Engineering:									
Credibility									
Mean	3.18	4.04	4.46	3.88	4.41	3.21	3.67	3.47	3.46
N	28	24	26	24	27	19	15	17	22
Specificity									
Mean	2.96	4.00	4.42	3.42	3.37	2.63	3.67	2.88	2.81
N	27	24	26	24	27	19	15	17	21
Breadth									
Mean	3.36	3.36	3.72	3.59	3.42	3.21	3.67	3.06	3.38
N	28	22	25	22	26	19	15	17	21
Importance									
Mean	3.25	4.14	4.50	3.91	4.15	3.11	4.07	2.65	2.76
N	28	22	24	22	26	19	14	17	21

DISCUSSION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

An alternative approach for considering these results is to classify the nine information sources into two groups: job-specific sources and general career sources. Job-specific sources tap information about a particular position in an identified organization. These sources include: personal experience, friends, parent/relatives, observation of people, and company/organizational representatives. Job-specific sources tailor information to the individual. They are familiar with the individual and his/her specific needs, talents and questions and, therefore, can provide information that specifically addresses these issues. General career sources tap information about jobs in a global sense and typically do not include unique aspects of a specific position or organization. These sources include: classes/coursework, counselors/advisors, the library, and Career Development and Placement Services. General career sources are designed to provide information to groups of people considering a specific occupation or groups of occupations. The information provided by general career sources does not provide individualized information because these sources are not as familiar with the individual as are the job-specific information sources.

Table 5 provides the mean ratings for credibility, specificity, breadth and importance of career information for job-specific and general career sources. A significant difference was found between the ratings for job specific sources and career general sources in terms of credibility, specificity, and importance of job information. In all cases, the mean for the job-specific sources were higher than the mean for the general career sources. These differences may reflect implicit assumptions that students hold about the usefulness of the information from a particular source. It could be that students place a higher value on job-specific sources as they are finishing college and attempting to select their first position. Thus, students will perceive the information from these sources as more credible, specific, and important.

Table 5
Ratings of Job Specific and Career General Sources

Factor	Job Specific (Mean)	Career General (Mean)
Credibility	4.06	3.72**
Specificity	3.79	3.34*
Breadth	3.57	3.49
Importance	4.06	3.55**

* Significant difference at .05 level
**Significant difference at .01 level

No significant difference between the mean ratings of job-specific sources and general career sources for breadth of career information was found. There are two possible explanations for why breadth does not differ between the types of sources. While the students may place a higher value on job-specific sources of career information, general career sources are often intentionally designed to provide a breadth of information. Therefore, while the breadth ratings of job-specific sources may be high (Mean = 3.57) due to the high value students place on these sources, the breadth ratings of the general career sources may also be high (Mean = 3.49) due to the nature of the sources. Another possible explanation is that breadth of information is a more general concept to students than is credibility, specificity or importance. Thus, it is difficult for students to differentiate this concept between job specific sources and career general sources.

These results suggest that organizational recruiters need to provide graduates with accurate information regarding the frequency of performance feedback within the organization. Students' expected daily or weekly feedback, which is typically not available in most organizations; this discrepancy could cause dissatisfaction with a first job. In making a selection decision, organizations should assess the congruency between organizational policies and practices and the graduate's expectations and attempt to resolve any large discrepancies before a hiring decision is made. Resolving differences in expectations regarding such things as salary, bases for raises, and frequency of feedback before the graduate is hired may lead to more satisfaction with the job and longer tenure with the organization.

Students perceive their career information as relatively good; that is being accurate, specific, important, and broad. However, organizational representatives received the second lowest rating in terms of frequency of use. This implies that organizations may want to be more assertive in disseminating information to college graduates. By increasing the amount of information given to college graduates in the early stages of their job search, or even before their job searches begin, organizations may be able to improve the accuracy of students' expectations.

Once college graduates begin their careers, their expectations regarding specific aspects of the job are likely to change as more information is obtained. Research exploring the nature of these changes and how early job experiences affect new employees' job satisfaction and career plans would be enlightening. Additional data on the early career experiences of the college students in this report are currently being gathered and analyzed. Results from the second phase of this study will help further our understanding of the impact of initial career expectations on subsequent career development.

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